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ABSTRACT

This book presents essays on the histories of five Massachusetts schools of higher education (Amherst College, Mount Holyoke College, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Smith College, Hampshire College) who together have had a successful consortia lasting for 25 years. The first essay, by Theodore P. Greene, depicts the temper of Amherst College in the early decades after its founding in 1821, a time when piety occasionally gave way to playfulness among those who formed the student body. The second essay on Mount Holyoke College in 1846-47 describes how several generations of critics have treated Emily Dickinson's experience there (Christopher Benfey). The essay on the University of Massachusetts presents an analysis of the school's past growth and future prospects (Ronald Story). The fourth essay, by Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, argues that embedded in the architecture of the campus of Smith College are four successive visions of the ideal Smith student; the campus thus becomes a text in which patterns of building reflect different conceptions of educated womanhood. The final essay provides a first-hand account of the founding of Hampshire College in an era of countercultural reform. An Afterword traces the history of the Five-College system, suggesting that it has always thrived on the individuality and idiosyncracies of the different campuses. (GLR)

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